

<p>Institution: Nottingham Trent University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: C19 Business and Management Studies</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Nottingham Business School (NBS) staff undertake research in line with the school’s mission of ‘delivering research that combines academic excellence with impact on business and society’. The immediate beneficiaries of this research are primarily commercial business organisations and UK government and public sector organisations (including NGOs), and associated individuals and community groups. The business organisations range from large multinationals (e.g. Alliance Boots, Experian and Rolls-Royce) to small local firms. They are drawn from a variety of sectors engaged in wealth creation, including manufacturing, retailing, financial services and leisure services (e.g. Toyota, Barclays and Betfair). Examples of public sector beneficiaries range from departments of UK Government (e.g. HM Treasury and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)) to local authorities and non-governmental organisations (e.g. D2N2 Local Economic Partnership) including several with a national remit (e.g. Gambling Commission and National Audit Office). The impact of the research extends well beyond the organisations and their employees to include their supply chains, consumers and taxpayers.</p> <p>Two types of impact dominate the research undertaken at NBS: <i>economic/commercial /organisational impact</i> and <i>impact on public policy/services</i>. The former includes new products and services (e.g. Cassidy’s research for the ESRC Retail Navigator project which identified new ways for retailers to engage with shoppers), improved working practices (e.g. Harris’s research which influenced guidance given by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on dispute resolution methods) and changes to the regulatory framework (e.g. harmonisation of taxation through the introduction of machine game duty (MGD) following research by Vaughan Williams), and changes in the allocation of resources, such as changes in planned investment decisions at Nottingham City Homes (NCH) following research by Mutch. The latter takes a number of different forms and includes influencing agricultural policy (e.g. Ackrill’s ESRC funded research which influenced EU sugar policy), improvements in the efficiency of public services (e.g. changes to general betting duty following earlier research by Vaughan Williams), and improvements in the quality of services. In addition, other types of impact from research undertaken in this Unit include: <i>environmental impact</i> (e.g. Mutch’s research which led to reduced carbon emissions from Nottingham’s stock of social housing); and <i>creative/cultural impact</i> (e.g. Oxborrow’s research which influenced the setting up of the ‘Creative Quarter’ in Nottingham in 2009).</p> <p>All research groups in NBS carry out research which has economic/commercial/organisational impact, while impact on public policy/services is more focused, with much of it, as in the Fire & Rescue Case Study, centred on the <i>Public Management & Governance</i> research group, although as the case studies show other research groups also influence policy such as the <i>Money, Finance & Risk</i> group which impacted on gambling and taxation policy and the <i>Organisation as Practice</i> group which impacted on housing policy at the local level.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Research carried out at NBS is both academically rigorous and managerially relevant. For NBS relevance means seeking to influence and change the behaviour and operational practice of commercial wealth creating, public sector and non-governmental organisations at regional, national and international levels. This reflects NBS’s long-standing and deeply embedded culture of applied research. This has its origins in research in human resource management (HRM) in the 1970s and 1980s, since extended across the management disciplines as a research culture has been built up and strengthened over time, led by NBS researchers of long standing such as Ackrill, Mutch, Samra-Fredericks, Vaughan Williams and Whittall.</p> <p>To exert influence requires engagement with non-academic users and potential users and NBS relies on four pathways or mechanisms that provide scope for creating and developing the sort of relationships that facilitate user engagement. These four pathways are: (i) career networks (i.e. personal networks derived from prior managerial experience); (ii) active participation in the work of professional bodies; (iii) executive education programmes run by NBS; and, (iv) consultancy activity and industry engagement.</p>

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The first pathway, **career networks**, primarily utilizes those staff with prior professional/managerial experience of working in a commercial or public service environment. These individuals typically have well developed personal networks of contacts, as well as a detailed in-depth knowledge of specific sectors, that they are able to put to effective use in facilitating user engagement (e.g. Murphy a former planner and senior civil servant, Barton a former police officer who had also worked for the Audit Commission, Klumpes, a former financial analyst and Lewis who had previously worked in the energy sector).

Active participation in professional bodies and similar bodies forms the second pathway. Engagement takes place through participation in executive committees, conferences and social events of such bodies, that enable regular contact with users, awareness of user issues/agendas and the opportunity to advise on and influence policy (e.g. Barton, Shipton and Tansley who have taken leadership roles with the CIPD, as well as Klumpes at the Institute of Actuaries, Prowle at Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and Yazdani who until recently was chair of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in the East Midlands).

The third pathway, **executive education**, has long been an important facet of NBS's activities, involving the provision of specialised training programmes, an executive MBA and a number of very successful sponsored degrees developed in partnership with several major commercial organisations (e.g. Barclays, Alliance Boots, Experian and Rolls-Royce). Delivered by academic staff from across NBS rather than a separate unit, they too provide opportunities for user engagement for research active staff.

Finally, the fourth pathway, **consultancy activity and industry engagement**, is something that all NBS staff are encouraged to undertake through the University's well defined procedures and this is a powerful means of user engagement. Thus what have begun as modest consultancy assignments have blossomed over time in to invitations to tender and successful research grant applications (e.g. Vaughan Williams and HM Customs & Excise and Cassidy/ Whysall and Alliance Boots).

Support for research leading to impact is provided both by the Unit (i.e. NBS) and the University. *Unit support* takes various forms. As part of the re-investment of QR funding from RAE2008, NBS appointed a Research Development Manager in 2011 with a remit that specifically includes facilitating impact through: linking experienced and early career researchers; advising on the drafting of impact plans where appropriate; and, updating staff on the value of and opportunities for impact (i.e. facilitated by attendance at conferences/workshops organised by bodies such as AURIL and Praxis Unico). More recently NBS has taken active steps to focus the attention of researchers on the value of impact by including impact as a key performance indicator in the annual audit of research active staff across NBS and the annual professorial review. In addition NBS supports networking activities to facilitate user engagement by academic staff through its 15 strong Executive Education & Corporate Relations team and through its long established internship scheme which places 400-500 undergraduates in one year paid placements (supervised by academic staff) every year.

NBS is able to draw on extensive *institutional support*, notably the Alumni Office and the NTU Research Grant Capture Team, provided centrally by the University. The latter provides support/guidance on the preparation, completion and submission of research grants and contracts to all academic staff. The team includes an Industry Officer, who has specific responsibility for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and similar initiatives funded by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) as well as a range of HEIF funded projects/schemes from which NBS has gained significant benefit over the census period. The team is able to support staff in identifying potential opportunities for KTPs, preparing and drafting KTP project proposals and liaising with the University's regional consultant, as well as providing administrative support and guidance for the quarterly management meetings that monitor and review the progress of each project.

c. Strategy and plans

NBS's primary goal for impact is to be recognised, by both the academic and business communities, as a business school whose research influences and shapes policy and practice in commercial organisations, the third sector and local and national government.

In meeting this goals NBS aims to: (i) seek out synergies between consultancy activities and

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research; (ii) build up collaborations and partnerships with leading organisations in sectors where NBS has research expertise (e.g. finance and retailing); (iii) capitalise on existing institutional relationships with business, third sector and public organisations (e.g. sponsored degrees, corporate training etc.); and, (iv) encourage and support external initiatives that provide opportunities for user/industry engagement (e.g. KTPs).

Among a number of specific measures designed to ensure the achievement of these aims are: (a) the inclusion of impact metrics at school, divisional and research group levels; (b) the inclusion of impact as a key performance indicator in the annual audit of individual research active staff, (c) the re-constitution of the NBS Advisory Board to align external members interests/experience more closely with those areas of NBS research that have particular scope for impact (e.g. a senior manager from Tesco to support research into retailing); (d) the setting up of specialist centres with a specific remit to undertake policy and practice orientated research (e.g. such as the Economic Strategy Research Bureau and the Betting Research Unit; and, (e) targeting external research initiatives/schemes that offer specific opportunities for influencing behaviour and operational practice (e.g. KTPs, ESRC Retail Navigator scheme).

d. Relationship to case studies

Case 1: Modernisation of Gambling Taxes. This case study is an example of the consultancy/industry engagement pathway outlined in section b. A short term consultancy project, comprising a 4 month research contract with HM Customs & Excise in 2000, formed the starting point for the development of a long term relationship with UK government departments and the betting sector. This first contract was successfully completed and led over time to invitations to tender for further research contracts followed by a succession of research grants in the same field (i.e. gambling policy and taxation reform. This enabled the researcher to gradually build up a strong relationship with users in both relevant departments of UK Government and commercial firms in the leisure services sector. Cumulatively the resulting research findings have exerted a powerful influence on gambling and taxation policy as the government departments concerned have come to recognise the value of the research carried out by this individual, and as his personal standing has grown in the gambling/betting community.

Case 2: Decent Homes: evaluation and information. This case study is also an exemplar of the consultancy/industry engagement pathway, though with the emphasis on industry engagement, assisted by institutional support provided by the University's Research Grant Capture Team. This support, and the close working relationship between NBS staff and the Research Grant Capture Team, in particular the team's industry officer who has specific responsibility for TSB funded industrial collaboration schemes, which had been built up over several years, resulted in NBS being awarded a KTP in 2010 to carry out collaborative research with Nottingham City Homes, the arm's length management organisation managing Nottingham City Council's social housing. Throughout the two year project colleagues from the Research Grant Capture Team worked closely with NBS staff to provide administrative support for the project. User engagement as part of this KTP project led to both economic/commercial/organisational and public policy/service impact.

Case 3: From Buildings to People: a new regulatory regime for Fire & Rescue services. This case study exemplifies the career network pathway, though it overlaps with the executive education pathway as well. Murphy joined NBS in 2009 following a career as a planner and latterly a senior civil servant working for a number of UK government departments including Department of Communities and Local Government where he gained extensive knowledge and experience of emergency planning. At NBS he was mentored by an experienced researcher (Liddle) and teamed up with Greenhalgh (now at Nottingham University) who had been researching performance management in the Emergency Services since 2006 and Brunsden from the School of Social Sciences who as a psychologist had a longstanding research interest in risk management. Murphy was then able to draw on his knowledge of public policy and UK government procedures and working practices, together with his personal network of professional contacts, in order to access data on the performance management regimes of the Fire & Rescue Services across the UK. Analysis of this data, together with further field work enabled Murphy and Greenhalgh to generate research findings that ultimately influenced public policy at both the national and regional levels. Recently international impact has been achieved as the research has been extended to Ireland.